

MISSOURI. Conservationist

VOLUME 69, ISSUE 6, JUNE 2008 • SERVING NATURE & YOU



Matching Medium to Message

Producing the *Conservationist* for our approximately 480,000 subscribers requires more than great information, art and photography—it requires a lot of paper. Though trees are a

renewable resource, the ways in which forests are managed and paper produced are significant conservation issues.

Because we strive to match our medium to our message, by using resources in a sustainable manner, the *Conservationist* has been printed on 10 percent post-consumer content paper since 1989. This was a significant achievement for the time, as availability of quality recycled papers was low until the early 1990s, and 10 percent was then a high recycled content for the coated paper we require for high-speed printing.

However, production processes and availability have since improved, and we are proud to announce that we will be upgrading our post-consumer recycled content to 30 percent in the next few months. We have also acquired Forest Stewardship Certification for our paper.

The Forest Stewardship Council is a nonprofit, international organization established in 1993 to “promote environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable management of the world’s forests.” The council accredits and monitors independent certification bodies who, in turn, certify forest management practices and the chain of custody for wood products. A product can only carry the FSC logo if its entire chain of production can be reliably traced from forest to shelf.

Our FSC certification means that we can ensure the paper used to print this magazine comes from responsibly managed forests where conservation values are employed.

While readers shouldn’t notice any visible difference when we change papers, according to the Environmental Defense Fund’s Paper Calculator (For more information visit www.papercalculator.org) there will be a significant change

in our conservation of resources. By upgrading from 10 to 30 percent post-consumer content, producing a year’s supply of our paper will require 3,545 less trees, 2,453 million Btu less energy and 1,292,337 gallons less water, as well as reducing solid waste by 213,830 pounds and CO₂ emissions by 394,222 pounds.

We’re excited about these savings, but we’ll keep looking for more. In the meantime, if you’d like to help in our efforts to reduce waste and conserve resources, you can recycle your copies of the *Conservationist*. To find recycling centers near you, check out the Department of Natural Resources’ publication *Recycling Drop-off Collection Services in Missouri Communities* at www.dnr.mo.gov/env/swmp/rrr/RecycDOliststatewide.pdf, contact their Solid Waste Management Program at swmp@dnr.mo.gov, or call 800-361-4827.

Readers who prefer to go completely paperless can find current and archived issues of the *Conservationist* online at www.MissouriConservation.org/conmag.

Another way you can help reduce waste is to notify our Circulation office if you are receiving duplicate copies of the magazine, or your address changes due to a move or 911 regulations. Circulation staff can be reached at 573-522-4115 ext. 3856, or by e-mail at subscriptions@mdc.mo.gov.

Here at the Conservation Department, we are dedicated to bringing you a responsibly produced, quality magazine, and we welcome your feedback. Thank you for reading.

Nichole LeClair, managing editor, and
Ara Clark, editor in chief



Nichole LeClair, left, and Ara Clark









OUR MISSION: *To protect and manage the fish, forest and wildlife resources of the state; to serve the public and facilitate their participation in resource management activities; and to provide opportunity for all citizens to use, enjoy and learn about fish, forest and wildlife resources.*



On the cover and left: Photographer David Stonner captured both of these images of the Missouri River. This month's issue features two very different Missouri River adventures. First, read the article *340-Mile Mirror* starting on Page 14 about the world's longest nonstop water race. Then, check out the article *Big Muddy = Big Catfish* starting on Page 26 to read about the excitement of, and methods for, catching big blue catfish in the Missouri River.

NextGEN

This section reports on goals established in *The Next Generation of Conservation*. To read more about this plan, visit www.MissouriConservation.org/12843.

- 5  PLANTS & ANIMALS
- 6  PLACES TO GO
- 7  COMMUNITY CONSERVATION
- 8  OUTDOOR RECREATION
- 10  CLEAN WATER
- 11  HEALTHY FORESTS
- 12  LANDOWNER ASSISTANCE
- 13  CONSERVATION EDUCATION

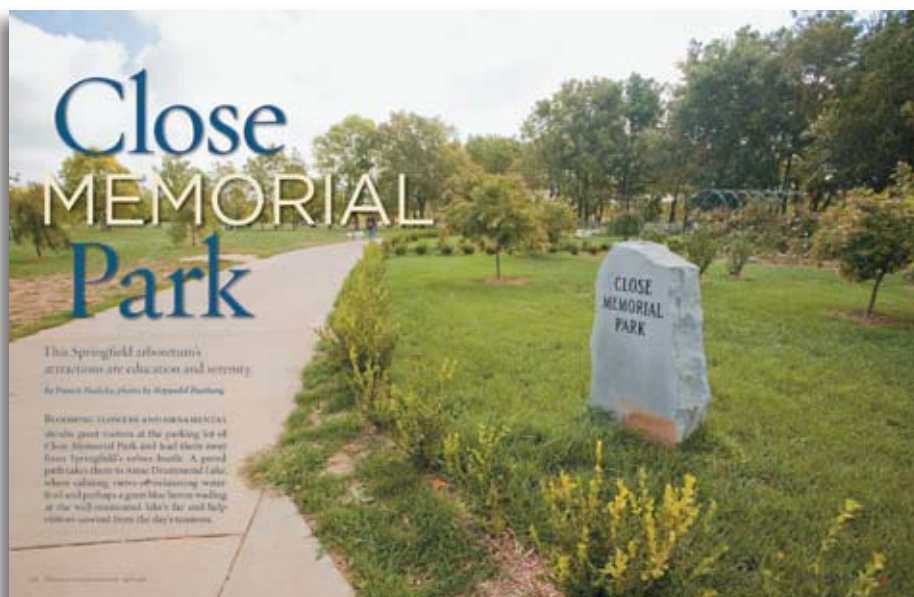
FEATURES

- 14 **340-Mile Mirror**
by Jim Low
The reasons and rewards behind this ultra-marathon are as diverse as the contestants.
- 22 **Top Notch Loggers**
By John Tuttle, photos by David Stonner
School teaches timber harvesters how to help Missouri landowners.
- 26 **Big Muddy = Big Catfish**
by Jim Low, photos by David Stonner
Big blue catfish have the run of the Missouri River.

MISCELLANY

- 2 **Letters**
- 4 **Ombudsman**
- 4 **On the Web**
- 4 **On the TV**
- 32 **Hunting and Fishing Calendar**
- 32 **Contributors**
- 33 **Behind the Code**
- 33 **Agent Notes**
- 33 **Time Capsule**





CLOSE FRIENDS

One of your feature articles, *Close Memorial Park* by Francis Skalicky [April, Page 26], I enjoyed very much. It was well written and explained the value of an arboretum to a community and the role it plays in the education of its residents.

I am a member of Friends of the Garden, Inc., a nonprofit organization whose focus is to financially support the development and maintenance of the existing and future Botanical Gardens at Close Memorial Park and to help raise funds to build the new Springfield-Greene County Botanical Center to be located

at Nathanael Greene–Close Memorial Parks in Southwest Springfield.

This park complex is already one of southwest Missouri's true hidden jewels, and once the Botanical Center is complete the location will be on the must-see list for everyone, not just the residents of southwest Missouri.

**George B. Deatz, vice president
Friends of the Garden, Inc., Springfield**

KINDRED SPIRITS

A friend and I hauled our camera gear to the Dunn Ranch blind for the first time a few years

ago. Noppadol Paothong's pictures [*Spirit of the Prairie*, March] remind us of similar pictures we have of harriers, prairie chickens and the sights of early spring storms in the distance. A male prairie chicken using the blind as a booming post was certainly a thrill of a lifetime, and the sights and sounds of the prairie are etched in our souls.

We were very taken with the contagious joy of Betty, the volunteer that led the 1/2-mile walk to the blind and answered all questions with care and patience. I understand she led trips almost daily for several seasons. Being at the ranch hours before daylight, in all kinds of early spring weather, to meet with those who signed up for the trip and answering the same questions daily/several times a day, takes a special commitment!

The next year I was anxious to share the experience with my wife. We were pleased to see Betty again and during the time in the blind we discovered that Betty is Betty Chmielniak Grace. How typical of her.

When the letter asking "Who is Chmielniak?" appeared in the February edition ["Letters," Page 2] I felt it was important that people know that she is so much more than the cartoonist that has brought joy to millions; she touches lives in many ways that relate to the outdoors and seems typical of those I have come in contact with that work for the MDC. Whether it has been a stringer check when fishing, a license check while hunting or advice on where I can observe yellow-headed blackbirds, I have found that same respect and love for what they do in the people of the MDC.

Steve Dumortier, Lee's Summit

ARE YOU CONSERVATION?

I just wanted to comment on how much I enjoy the pictures and information you now provide on the back of the magazine. This month the caption is "I am Conservation" and shows Ron Tuttle, the responsible logger who was named the Missouri Logger of the Year for 2007.

Whoever is responsible for the change should certainly be commended. The pictures were great, but this type of information is wonderful along with a picture and a name.

Anne Beaver, Diamond





DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS

Phone: 573-751-4115
Address: PO Box 180,
Jefferson City 65102-0180

REGIONAL OFFICES

Southeast/Cape Girardeau: 573-290-5730
Central/Columbia: 573-884-6861
Kansas City: 816-655-6250
Northeast/Kirksville: 660-785-2420
Southwest/Springfield: 417-895-6880
Northwest/St. Joseph: 816-271-3100
St. Louis: 636-441-4554
Ozark/West Plains: 417-256-7161

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Phone: 573-522-4115, ext. 3856 or 3249
Address: Circulation, PO Box 180,
Jefferson City 65102-0180
E-mail subscriptions: Subscriptions@mdc.mo.gov
Online subscriptions and address changes:
www.MissouriConservationist.org/15287
Cost of subscriptions: Free to Missouri households
Out of State \$7 per year
Out of Country \$10 per year
Address Changes: Go online, call, write or e-mail

OMBUDSMAN QUESTIONS

Phone: 573-522-4115, ext. 3848
Address: Ombudsman, PO Box 180,
Jefferson City 65102-0180
E-mail: Ken.Drenon@mdc.mo.gov

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

Phone: 573-522-4115, ext. 3245 or 3847
Address: Magazine Editor, PO Box 180,
Jefferson City 65102-0180
E-mail: Magazine@mdc.mo.gov

READER PHOTO SUBMISSIONS

Address: *Missouri Conservationist*, Reader Photo,
PO Box 180, Jefferson City 65102-0180
E-mail: Readerphoto@mdc.mo.gov

MISSOURI. Conservationist

GOVERNOR *Matt Blunt*

THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Don Johnson
Chip McGeehan
Lowell Mohler
Becky Plattner

Director *John Hoskins*
Assistant Director *Tim Ripperger*
Assistant Director *Dave Erickson*
Assistant Director *Robert Ziehmer*
Internal Auditor *Nancy Dubbert*
General Counsel *Tracy McGinnis*

DIVISION CHIEFS

Administrative Services *Carter Campbell*
Design and Development *Bill Lueckenhoff*
Fisheries *Bill Turner*
Forestry *Lisa G. Allen*
Human Resources *Debbie Strobel*
Outreach & Education *Lorna Domke*
Private Land Services *Bill McGuire*
Protection *Larry Yamnitz*
Resource Science *Ronald Dent*
Wildlife *Dee Cee Darrow*

CONSERVATIONIST STAFF

Editor In Chief *Ara Clark*
Managing Editor *Nichole LeClair*
Art Director *Cliff White*
Writer/Editor *Tom Cwynar*
Staff Writer *Bonnie Chasteen*
Staff Writer *Jim Low*
Photographer *Noppadol Paothong*
Photographer *David Stonner*
Designer *Stephanie Ruby*
Artist *Dave Besenger*
Artist *Mark Raithel*
Circulation *Laura Scheuler*

The *Missouri Conservationist* (ISSN 0026-6515) is the official monthly publication of the Missouri Department of Conservation, 2901 West Truman Boulevard, Jefferson City, MO (Mailing address: PO Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102.) Subscription free to adult Missouri residents; out of state \$7 per year; out of country \$10 per year. Notification of address change must include both old and new address (send mailing label with the subscriber number on it) with 60-day notice. Preferred periodical postage paid at Jefferson City, Mo., and at additional entry offices. Postmaster: Send correspondence to Circulation, PO Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180. Phone: 573-522-4115, ext. 3856 or 3249. Copyright © 2008 by the Conservation Commission of the State of Missouri.

Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs of the Missouri Department of Conservation is available to all individuals without regard to their race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. Questions should be directed to the Department of Conservation, PO Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102, 573-751-4115 (voice) or 800-735-2966 (TTY), or to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Division of Federal Assistance, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Mail Stop: MBSP-4020, Arlington, VA 22203.

Printed in USA



Reader Photo

BUTTERFLY GARDEN

Bev Frank of Kansas City captured this image of a tiger swallowtail butterfly that was visiting her flower garden last year. Frank said she plants many of her flowers specifically to attract butterflies. "It took a bit of patience to finally get the picture of the butterfly with its wings spread," said Frank. "These butterflies are beautiful and particularly seem to enjoy my flowers."

on the WEB

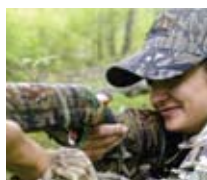
This month check out our featured Web pages, or go online anytime to learn more about conservation at www.MissouriConservation.org.



CATFISH IN MISSOURI

www.MissouriConservation.org/7228

If you're new to catfishing, use these pages to stay up-to-date with regulations, learn to identify catfish and find good catfish waters.



OUTDOOR WOMEN

www.MissouriConservation.org/13108

This program offers women fun and exciting opportunities to explore or enhance their knowledge of outdoor skills from expert instructors.



GROW NATIVE!

www.GrowNative.org

This Web site is designed to help you learn about Missouri's native plants and how to use them to create beautiful landscapes on your property.



ASK THE OMBUDSMAN

Q: We had a lot of flooding earlier this year. I was wondering what happens to the fish during high water and swift currents?

A: Fish have been contending with floods forever and seem to weather the events well. However, floodwaters can be helpful or harmful, depending on severity and timing.

In general, fish, and the habitats in which they live, depend on a natural cycle of high and low water. For example, a spring flood might reduce the spawning success of smallmouth bass this year, but it might also remove accumulations of silt, or add the cover of new logs or boulders that benefit the population for years to come. High water at spawning time can be harmful to some species, but may help other species of fish access new areas. Sometimes fish travel great distances during high water. One flathead catfish tagged in the Missouri River was recovered 30 days later 90 miles upstream in a tributary of the Nodaway River. Of course, pollution and debris can be negative aspects of floodwater. Current isn't too much of a concern as fish are built to deal with fast water. We think they probably seek protection in sheltered areas if/when things get too intense.

Rising water generally triggers fish movement and active feeding. A general rise of several inches or a foot or two can provide great fishing, but be aware of weather conditions and don't take chances during flood events. Safety should be your first priority. Check out MDC's weekly fishing report at www.MissouriConservation.org for Web sites providing stream and lake water levels.

Ombudsman Ken Drenon will respond to your questions, suggestions or complaints concerning Department of Conservation programs. Write him at PO Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180, call him at 573-522-4115, ext. 3848, or e-mail him at Ken.Drenon@mdc.mo.gov.

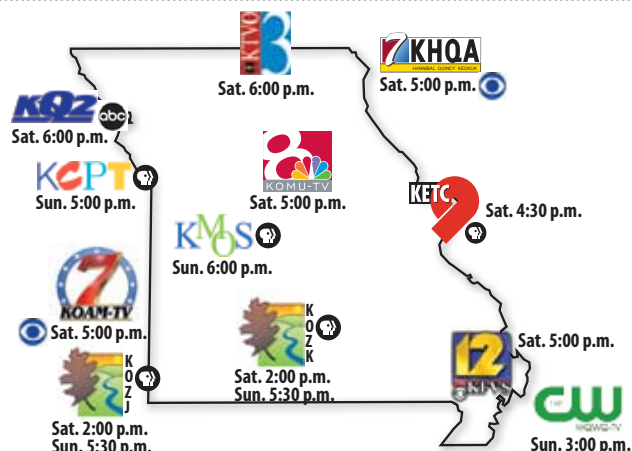
on the TV

For additional show information and video clips, be sure to visit

www.MissouriConservation.org/8726.



Television
the way
nature
intended!





Species of Concern

Dusty Hognose Snake



Common name: Dusty hognose snake

Scientific names: *Heterodon gloydi*

Range: Extreme southeastern Missouri

Classification: Critically imperiled

To learn more about endangered species: www.MissouriConservation.org/8227

MISSOURI ONCE WAS home to three species of hognose snake. The most common, the eastern hognose (*H. platirhinos*) still is found statewide. The plains hognose, (*H. nasicus*) inhabited northwestern Missouri, but it now is classified as extirpated, not having been seen in Missouri since 1961. The dusty hognose also was long thought to be extirpated, with a last sighting in 1961. Then, in 2004, one turned up in the species' old haunts—the increasingly rare sand prairie habitat of southeastern Missouri. Four more sightings have been verified since then. The dusty hognose has a more sharply upturned nose than the eastern. Also, the underside of the tail of both the dusty and plains species behind the vent is solid black, whereas the tip of eastern's tail is yellow underneath. If you see what you believe is one of the uncommon hognose species, please take photos of the head and tail before releasing the snake and contacting the nearest Conservation Department office (see Page 3).

PHOTO: JIM RATHER; ART: MARK RATHIEL

Spring Orchids in Bloom

Look for these floral jewels to dazzle the eye.

A June ramble can reward you with floral delights. More than a dozen native orchids bloom this month, from the showy purple fringeless to the delicate ragged orchid.

Some, like the grass pink, are found only in a handful of sites. Orchids rarely survive transplantation and should be left in their natural habitats.



Missouri Orchids (\$5 plus shipping and sales tax) has color photos and descriptions of 34 orchids. To order a copy, call toll-free 877-521-8632 or visit www.mdcNatureShop.com.

Quail, Turkeys Raising Broods

June can make or break ground-nesters.

June is when you are most likely to see a wild turkey poult or a bobwhite quail chick. Both species nest on the ground, hatching their broods mainly in May and June. Weather in the next two months will be critical to rebuilding populations that have suffered from bad weather the past few years. Poults and chicks need enough rain to encourage plant and insect growth, but not so much moisture that young birds drown. Similarly, they need warm temperatures, but unseasonably hot, dry weather reduces their chances of survival. These factors, along with quality cover and bare soil for dusting, spell quail and turkey success.



Predators take some birds each year, but not enough to stop them from multiplying with favorable conditions.



Trail of Fun in Springfield

This is a great month to enjoy a hike.

When June weather turns irresistible, southwest Missouri residents can enjoy hikes on the Springfield Conservation Nature Center's 3 miles of trails. The Long Trail makes a winding, 2.1-mile loop, traversing forest and field, lakefront and valleys. It connects to the Ozark Greenways trail system. Six trails connecting to the Long Trail take hikers on .1- to .3-mile forays past bluffs, marshes and savannas. All trails have been cleared of debris from last year's ice storms. Call 417-888-4237 for more information and to learn about National Trails Day events June 7.



Big River Float

America's two greatest rivers in four miles

Canoeists and kayakers can experience the United States' two greatest rivers in one float at Columbia Bottom Conservation Area, which lies at the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers. One put-in point is a concrete boat ramp on the Missouri River at Columbia Bottom's north side. Pelican Island Access, about 7 miles upriver from the Columbia Bottom, has a boat ramp adjacent to Pelican Island Natural Area. The rivers merge about 2.5 miles downstream from the Columbia

Bottom boat ramp. You can wave to sightseers standing on the Confluence Observation Platform. The take-out point is a canoe/kayak access on the west bank of the Mississippi River 1.5 miles downstream from the observation platform. The rivers can be turbulent, especially when they are at high flows. Information about the Missouri River's flow for the past 30 days is available at <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/mo/nwis/>. Click on "Real-Time Data."

Trail Guide



CAMDEN COUNTY GETAWAY



NAMED FOR A tributary of the Niangua River, Fiery Fork CA is a great place for hikers, hunters, picnickers, anglers and campers. The area has a gravel bar launch for canoes, kayaks and other small boats. Hikers can

view wildlife in natural settings along the River Glade Trail's 1-mile loop or venture into the 1,606-acre area's interior on the linear, 1.25-mile Area Access Trail. You can have a picnic or stay overnight in one of two campgrounds with gravel-covered camping pads, fire grates and concrete picnic tables. You will find a concrete privy in the campground near the trailhead. You need to bring your own drinking and cooking water, however. Fishing opportunities include wade-fishing for bass, sunfish and suckers in Fiery Fork or float-fishing the Little Niangua River. Lake of the Ozarks lies about 4 miles down the Little Niangua from the access on Fiery Fork.

Area name: Fiery Fork Conservation Area

Trails: Two totaling 2.75 miles

Unique features: Picnic/camp sites

For more information: Call 573-346-2210, ext. 229, or visit www.MissouriConservation.org/a8103



TAKING ACTION

Scott County: First to meet NBCI goals

Group featured: Scott County landowners, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, Missouri Department of Conservation and the Scott County Soil and Water Conservation District. The USDA's Conservation Security Program made financial support possible for the planting efforts.

Group mission: To bring back northern bobwhite quail to Scott County through the Northern Bobwhite Conservation Initiative (NBCI).

SCOTT COUNTY LANDOWNERS, with support from state and federal conservation and agriculture programs, set out to restore 4,500 acres of quail habitat in 2002—the goal set by the Northern Bobwhite Conservation Initiative. In 2007, they became the first team in the country to meet, and then surpass, their NBCI objectives. More than 7,000 acres of suitable habitat have been established.

Quail populations have responded to this real estate boom. Conservation Department surveys indicate the highest quail sightings in decades. Whereas hunters reported seeing an average of five coveys per 8-hour hunting day between 1940 and 1960, eight coveys per day were recorded during the 2007–08 season. Improving habitat is key to restoring quail and other grassland species. This can be accomplished through establishing native grass field borders, discing, burning, brushpile building, edge feathering, spraying and planting shrubs.

Bee Thankful

Celebrate National Pollinator Week June 22–28.

Seventy-five percent of plants grown worldwide for food, beverages, fibers, condiments, spices and medicines are pollinated by animals, according to the North American Pollinator Protection Campaign. Without the services of pollinators, which include flies, beetles, wasps, ants, butterflies, moths, birds, bats, small mammals and, of course, bees, many agricultural products would be reduced in quantity and quality, or be unavailable. Wildlife also depends on pollinators to maintain plant life for food and habitat.

Populations of these small but important workers are currently facing declines due to disease, competition from exotic species, habitat loss and other factors.

National Pollinator Week, officially declared by the U.S. Senate (S. Res. 580) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 2007, aims to recognize these valuable living resources, as well as encourage pollinator-friendly conservation practices.

Celebrate and support pollinators in your area June 22–28, and throughout the year, by using native plants for landscaping and creating butterfly or “pollinator gardens,” by using pesticides responsibly and by creating and maintaining green space. Visit Grow Native! at www.GrowNative.org and the Pollinator Partnership at www.pollinator.org for more ideas and resources.





Free Fishing Days

There's nothing fishy about these free samples.

There's no better time to go on a fishing float than the first Saturday and Sunday after the first Monday in June. On

those weekend days (June 7–8 this year) the



Conservation Department allows anyone to fish without a fishing permit, trout permit or daily tag. The only catch is that anglers still have to abide by regulations

concerning seasons, limits and methods.

Fish and Float

Float fishing can be leisurely or productive—but not both.

If you simply cast lures or baits as you float along, you probably won't have much action. If you stop your canoe to thoroughly fish the water, you'll probably catch plenty of fish, but you'll have to do a lot of walking.

It's possible to stay in the canoe and move yourself into position for good fishing, but you'll find boat control challenging, especially when you have to deal with snags, tangles or even fighting fish. You'll also miss some of the fishier spots because you'll be busy steering.

To make the most of your fishing float, beach the canoe and hit areas hard by wading. Two anglers can leapfrog down a river, each bringing the boat past the other angler and then fishing downstream from it.



Access to Access

Scout it Out



Name: Boiling Spring Access, Big Piney River

Location: Texas County, 7 miles west of Highway 63 on Route BB.

For more info: www.MissouriConservation.org/a6422



CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT ACCESSES provide a means for the public to use and enjoy most Missouri waterways. Some of the accesses include paved ramps and fishing docks, but many of our accesses on smaller streams are just places where you can drive close enough to the water to launch a small boat or canoe. Often, however, even

these less formal accesses offer such amenities as privies, parking lots, picnic tables and trails.

They're also great places to fish or to launch a fishing trip. Boiling Springs Access on the Big Piney River, for example, offers access to a nice stretch of the river, but it is also a great place to start a float downstream. A decent daylong float down to the Conservation Department's Mason Bridge Access takes you through six scenic miles of stream that contains good populations of bass, sunfish, catfish and crappie. This is a Category I, or "Easy" float, except during high water periods.

Look for access-to-access float fishing opportunities on your favorite stream by consulting *A Paddler's Guide to Missouri*. (See *A Seat With a View*, Page 9.) Nearby liveries will rent you a canoe or raft and arrange transportation, or use your own boat and spot a vehicle at the downstream access.



A Seat With a View

River floats feature abundant natural beauty and close encounters with wildlife.

The seat of a canoe, kayak, raft or small flatbottom boat provides a great nature-viewing platform. Simply launch the vessel in a Missouri stream and let the current carry you through a constantly changing display of natural beauty. You'll see towering bluffs, overhanging forests, fields of waving grass and a profusion of floating, climbing and hanging streamside vegetation, much of it speckled with exquisite flowers.

You'll also spot lots of wildlife. Animals are used to objects drifting downstream, and if you're quiet and don't move much, they tend not to notice you. Keep a camera ready and you could capture some memorable photos of deer, mink, beaver or even otters. Streams are also a delight for birders. In addition to kingfishers (see box below), birders may encounter green herons, Louisiana waterthrushes, northern parulas and a variety of ducks.

For the best nature-viewing, choose slower streams and float on weekdays or during cooler months. Go slow and stop often.



A Paddler's Guide to Missouri is a detailed guide to most of the floatable Missouri streams. The book includes stream maps that show accesses and landmarks, mileage logs, difficulty levels and other valuable floating information. *A Paddler's Guide to Missouri* is available for \$6 plus shipping and handling and sales tax (where applicable) by calling, toll-free, 877-521-8632 or going to www.mdcNatureShop.com.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER

Belted Kingfisher

NOT EVERY SPLASH you hear while floating a river is from a fish leaping or a turtle tipping off a log; sometimes it comes from a kingfisher plunging. Belted kingfishers (*Ceryle alcyon*) feed mostly by gravity. They fly or hover above the water then allow themselves to fall on prey, usually small fish and crayfish.

It's easy to spot kingfishers. These stocky birds, somewhat larger than robins, frequent most Missouri streams. They often perch on snags and overhanging tree limbs, from which they can plunge-dive after prey.

Kingfishers are mostly bluish-gray above and white below, with a conspicuous white collar. The birds have small feet, a thick bill and a conspicuous ragged crest. Females also have reddish-brown markings on their chest and sides. In most bird species, males are more colorful than females.

The birds fly with a series of wing flaps followed by a glide. They are very territorial and often emit loud rattling calls.

If you don't spot kingfishers, you're apt to see their nest openings, which resemble pockmarks in earthen banks. A mostly horizontal tunnel, which might be as long as 8 feet, leads to a hollowed-out end where the female lays five to eight pure white eggs. Both male and female belted kingfishers scratch out the tunnel, incubate the eggs and feed the young.



BELTED KINGFISHER: JIM RATHER; GREEN HERON: NOPPADOL PAOTHONG



Keep Bottles Out of Canoes!

And take a container for your trash on float trips.

Planning a float trip? Don't take any glass containers. State law prohibits taking glass-bottled beverages in canoes, kayaks, float tubes or other easily tipped vessels on Missouri streams. It also requires floaters to keep coolers and similar containers sealed to prevent contents from spilling. You also must bring a mesh bag or other trash container to haul refuse to a proper disposal receptacle when you leave the stream. Failure to do so is a class C misdemeanor. Most canoe outfitters provide free Stash Your Trash bags for their customers.



upper portion of either stream. You need permission from stream-side landowners to fish other stretches. Good wade-fishing lures include tiny crayfish imitations, curly-tailed jigs, spinners and trout fishing-sized worms. Joachim Creek from the Highway V bridge to the Highway A bridge in Jefferson County is a smallmouth bass management area. For more information, see the 2008 *A Summary of Missouri Fishing Regulations*, available at permit vendors.

Mississippi Sister Streams

Find extreme stream-fishing fun by foot or by boat.

Two small Mississippi River tributaries in Jefferson County offer diverse fishing experiences. Joachim Creek joins the Mississippi in Herculaneum. Three miles south is the mouth of Plattin Creek. The lower stretches of both streams have largemouth bass and crappie, plus big-river fish such as carp and catfish. The upper reaches have wade-fishing for smallmouth bass and rock bass. Boaters can reach the lower portions of these streams from the Mississippi River. Walther Park, on Joachim Creek in DeSoto, is the only public access on the

Stream Team



Howardville Jumpstart



STREAM TEAM NO. 1617 began in New Madrid County, but its influence is rapidly spreading throughout Missouri's Bootheel region. Members have devoted more than 3,000 worker hours to conducting stream clean-ups, training, educational events, tree planting and water-quality monitoring. Their newest undertaking is planting 4,500 trees in the River Bends Conservation Opportunity Area. The project is part of efforts to bring native trees back to a region once covered by bottomland hardwood forest. Many of the tree planters will be youngsters. "We don't have many trees around here," said team leader Vannessa Frazier. "We always have hot dogs and chips and things for the kids, and we always give them a T-shirt. We talk to them about taking pride in what they are doing and how much it means to the environment. If you can get it in them while they are small, it will never leave them."

Stream Team Number: 1617

Date formed: Sept. 6, 2000

Location: Little River

For more info about Stream Teams: www.mostreamteam.org



Our Glorious Forests

PECK RANCH CONSERVATION AREA



Size of area: 23,049

Location: 5 miles east of Winona on Route H, then 7 miles east on gravel in Shannon County

Highlights: This area is predominantly pine and oak woodlands with a rich diversity of glades, forest, old fields, cropland and some wetlands. Facilities and features include primitive camping, picnic areas, firearms range, archery range, beaver pond viewing deck, a perennial stream and four Natural Areas (Grassy Pond, Goldenseal, Stegall Mountain and Mule Hollow).

Find more info: Call 417-256-7161



JUNE IS A good time to explore the glories of the Peck Ranch Conservation Area by way of the 11-mile Current River Section of the Ozark Trail. Backpackers will encounter scenic limestone and rhyolite glades, which provide natural openings among the oak-pine woodland that dominates the region. Narrow ridges range from 900 to 1,000 feet in elevation. At 1,348 feet above sea level, Stegall Mountain is the area's highest point. Rogers Creek and Mill Creek, which flow into the Current River, meander through the area. Peck Ranch began in the early 1900s as Chicago businessman George Peck's scheme to supply fuel for his Mid-Continent Iron Company. Today, Department managers are using diverse management techniques, including prescribed fire and forest products harvesting methods, to maintain and restore the many natural communities on Peck Ranch. To download the area map and brochure, visit www.MissouriConservation.org/17424.

PHOTO: DAVID STONNER; ART: MARK RAITHEL

Forest Management Help

Contact a consulting forester for a variety of services.

How can you manage your forest for both wood and wildlife? Private consulting foresters can help you answer this question. They provide a variety of forest management services on a fee basis. Some of their services include appraisals and inventories for assistance in buying or selling timber or timber lands; assessing loss due to fire, theft, chemical spray or condemnation; and tax valuation. Obtain a directory of consulting foresters from the Missouri Consulting Foresters Association at www.missouriforesters.com.



We All Live in a Forest

TRIM Program helps communities after ice storms.

The ice storm of January 2007 left 39 Missouri counties in a state of disaster. To help communities replace and repair ice-damaged trees, the Missouri Conservation Commission added \$250,000 to the Tree Resource Improvement and Maintenance program's 2007 budget, bringing total funds to \$500,000. Since then, more than 40 Missouri communities have received TRIM grants. One of them is the City of Ash Grove, northwest of Springfield. "We lost around 30 trees in the city park," said Deanna Monnig, advisory park board president. "This year we're replacing 18 of them. It has been a wonderful blessing to receive the TRIM grants." To learn how the TRIM program can help community forests recover from storm damage, call Justine Gartner at 573-522-4115, ext. 3116, or visit www.MissouriConservation.org/7367.





Armadillos in Your Yard?

Free brochure details how to deal with these lawn pests.

Native to Mexico, forest- and water-loving armadillos have crossed bridged rivers and survived freeway traffic to make their home in Missouri. Here these roving, insect-eating burrowers are challenging highway drivers and digging up lawns. If you don't dig them burrowing in your yard,

ask for the *Armadillos in Missouri* brochure.

This free publication details how to deter, trap and legally shoot armadillos. To request it, write to MDC, PLS



015, PO Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102 or e-mail pubstaff@mdc.mo.gov.

Wetland Restoration Packet

Explains farm wetland programs and incentives.

If you own flood-prone rural acres, they may be eligible for state and federal wetland assistance. However, keeping up with the many programs available for wetland restoration can be daunting. An information packet titled *Missouri Agricultural Wetland Initiative* helps you sort through the five programs and determine which is right for your land and economic challenges. Inside the packet you'll find an overview of program benefits to producers. These include reduced production costs and economic incentives, as well as

improved soil, water, wildlife and nutrient conservation, among others. The "tools" section details the many practices and programs available to producers. To request



this item, write to MDC, PLS 023, PO Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102 or e-mail pubstaff@mdc.mo.gov.

CP23 Enhancement Program Appeals to Duck Lovers

On the Ground



IT'S HARD TO tell who's wilder about wetlands and ducks—Kenny Mauzey or his wife, Tessa. Together, this Chariton County couple built a Continuous Conservation Reserve CP23 Enhancement program on their property, and they're planning a second. "The more wetland projects we see, the better," the couple agrees.

A cooperative effort between Ducks Unlimited and MDC, the CP23 Enhancement Program allows Kenny and Tessa to practice seasonal flooding of adjoining crops. "We didn't have a lot of ducks until we went out on the ice after hunting season and knocked down the corn. When spring came, we couldn't believe the ducks we had," Kenny said. CP23 Enhancement Program has two pilot focus areas: Ray, Carroll, Chariton, Saline and Lafayette counties and Pike, Lincoln, St. Charles and St. Louis counties. If you own land in these areas, call the Fulton and Chillicothe NRCS field offices for more information.



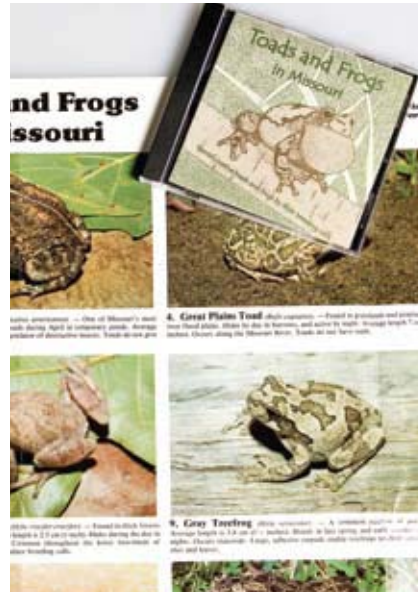
Amphibian Fun

CD and poster feature 20 of Missouri's toads and frogs.

Missouri summers are alive with sound, especially after a rain or at night. But how do you know what creatures make which noises? The Nature Shop's *Toads and Frogs of Missouri* CD and poster combo helps you identify the amphibian section of summer's nightly chorus.

"You would never guess half the sounds that frogs and toads make," said Conservation Department Herpetologist Jeff Briggler. "Most people automatically assume a spring peeper is a bird of some kind because of its chirping quality. Cricket frogs get their name because they sound so much like insects. This CD makes it simple to put a name to each frog or toad's voice."

Toads and Frogs of Missouri and its full-color, 22-by-34-inch poster matches 20 green faces with the sweet voices of summer. The set sells for \$8 plus shipping and handling and sales tax (where applicable). To order, call toll-free 877-521-8632 or visit www.mdcNatureShop.com.



Meet Us at the Fairs

Look for MDC exhibits at local fairs around the state.

Fairs celebrate local crops, crafts and culture. Here in Missouri, they also feature the chance to learn more about conservation. Stop by the Conservation building at the Missouri State Fair in Sedalia, Aug. 7–17, and look for our exhibits at local fairs around the state this summer: Northeast Missouri Fair, Kirksville, July 14–19; Ozark Empire Fair, Springfield, July 25–Aug. 3; North Central Missouri Fair, Trenton, July 29–Aug. 2; Northwest Missouri State Fair, Bethany, Aug. 28–Sept. 1; SEMO District Fair, Cape Girardeau, Sept. 6–13 and the Stoddard County and the Kennett Fairs in September.

NATURE ACTIVITY



NATURE ACTIVITY: DAVID STONNER; TOADS AND FROGS: CLIFF WHITE

NE Regional Office



NEXT TIME YOU'RE in Kirksville, drop by the Department's beautiful Northeast Regional Office. Opened December 2006, this state-of-the-art "green" facility is a great place for families and kids to learn about nature.

In the exhibit area, a 1,300-gallon aquarium, many examples of Missouri wildlife and hands-on activities await visitors.

Outside are two ponds, one stocked with channel catfish, largemouth bass and bluegill for public fishing (according to statewide regulations). A half-mile trail takes hikers through a wooded area, across several bridges and through a prairie restoration plot.

During the month of June, the exhibit area will display "Caterpillars with Character," a group of sketches by artist Kelly Hughes. Later in the month, the office unveils a new exhibit titled "Species of Concern," featuring a real bald eagle nest.

For a list of Northeast Regional Office events, check their Web page at www.MissouriConservation.org/2426

Program: Two new exhibits and naturalist programs

When: Office hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Where: 3500 South Baltimore, Kirksville

For more information: Call 660-785-2420



340-MILE MIRROR

The reasons and rewards behind this ultra-marathon are as diverse as the contestants.

BY JIM LOW, PHOTOS BY DAVID STONNER



The rules of the Missouri River 340 are simple:

Paddle from Kansas City to St. Charles in 100 hours or less. You can accept food and supplies at stops along the way, but not on the water.

Beneath this superficial simplicity are dozens of human dramas. For 100 hours each summer, the ribbon of water through Missouri's midsection becomes a 340-mile mirror that reflects each paddler's inner being. Those who confront the river's uncompromising realities head-on garner something that is rare in a world of pre-packaged, sanitized experiences—an authentic adventure.

Here are a few personal stories from last summer's world's longest nonstop water race.



Paddlers must mentally and physically prepare for the 340-mile journey.

WEST HANSEN, 45, AUSTIN, TEXAS

Custom Builder, Men's Tandem—44:27

After majoring in psychology in college, Hansen worked in that field for 15 years before changing direction and devoting his time to building custom horse barns. He played football in high school and was a cheerleader in college. He took up competitive paddling in 1992 because it let him combine his love of athletic competition and nature.

One of the nation's top ultra-marathon water racers, Hansen competes in dozens of events annually. He won the men's solo division in the 2006 MR340, but found it "kind of lonely." He and partner Richard Steppe won the men's tandem division last year.

"It's beautiful," Hansen said of the Missouri River. "I love the hills and

cliffs. It's daunting because of its size; it's such a mass of water. While it doesn't require as much technical skill as a smaller, faster river, it does require quite a bit of alertness."

Hansen isn't young or especially fast. What sets him apart is his capacity to work through pain. He attributes this to the larger perspective that comes with age.

"When you are little and you scrape a knee, all you know is that you are in pain now. As you get older, you have to do more difficult things like school, jobs and marriage. It changes your perspective. When you are out there and hurting, you realize there are more important things than the pain you are going through right now."



ERIN MAGEE, 44, MARTINDALE, TEXAS

Secretary, Texas State University, Women's Solo—55:33

Magee's story supports Hansen's theory about ultra-marathoners. "I got into it for all the wrong reasons and stayed in it for all the right ones," she said.

"The wrong reason to do any kind of ultra-distance event is to impress somebody else. At some point, the race becomes so long that you come face to face with whatever is within you that made you think it was important to impress someone who is not present.

"When I took up the sport," she continued, "I was an alcoholic. I was trying to impress my then-husband, who was a paddler. At 27 or 28 I was a couch potato. To get inside his walls, I was going to get in a boat, and maybe he would get off my back. I got in the boat and never got out."

Magee competes in 30 to 40 paddling events, triathlons and marathons annually. She learned about the MR340 from Hansen.

"West came home from the first year's event and told me about this big water with nobody around," she said. "It sounded like a soloist's paradise. I came to Missouri to find my place in the world instead of my place among a bunch of rocks in a 50-foot-wide river."

She described the MR340 as "an awesome event for someone who wants to find out something about what's inside them."



"I came to Missouri to find my place in the world instead of my place among a bunch of rocks in a 50-foot-wide river."

—ERIN MAGEE

ANN GROVE, 66, BENECIA, CALIF.

Physical Therapist, Mixed Tandem—did not finish

For Ann Grove and partner Wayne Kocher, just surviving the race was a triumph. They were paddling down the dark, fog-shrouded river above Hermann early July 26—Wayne's 70th birthday—when they saw the lights of a towboat pushing barges upriver. They tried to cross in front of the barge to the opposite side of the river.

"We didn't know it was there until it was 10 feet away," said Grove. "I yelled, 'Wayne!' and we hit and were thrown under the barge."

In the churning water, sand and mud, the couple desperately clawed their way along the bottom of the barge toward its edge.

"I was running out of air," she said.

"I gulped some water, and I thought, 'If I get out of this and don't get dysentery I am going to live to be 130.'"

They both emerged on the same side, but couldn't hear one another's frantic calls at first. Just as they found each other, the barge crew threw a rope and pulled them to safety. Their \$5,500 outrigger kayak washed up on wing dikes in pieces, ending the race after a grueling 250-mile paddle. They escaped with only bruises.

"We were fortunate," said Grove. "The river was beautiful, and people were just outstanding in their concern. Their warmth was amazing. I have never been hugged so much in my life. You don't always finish what you go after, but the effort along the way is worth it."



PHOTO BY ROGER DUINN

KATIE PFEFFERKORN, 22, CHAFFEE, MO.

Chemical Engineering Major, MU, Women's Solo—58:57

Pfefferkorn is a self-proclaimed "sucker for new adventures." She entered the first MR340 on a lark, using a borrowed boat, and finished second. It was her first paddling competition, and she beat the 100-hour deadline by a mere 24 minutes. This year she finished second again, but she almost cut her time in half.

She gave Magee, who is one of the nation's top women competitors, a run for her money, passing her in the night about 100 miles into the race. Pfefferkorn's time in the lead was brief, but she continued to pressure the front-runner, arriving at the Carl R. Noren Access in Jefferson City just as Magee was getting up from a nap.

"I didn't expect to do that well," confesses Pfefferkorn, whose goal was to finish in under 80 hours. "After sitting at the boat ramp the first night,

I decided I wanted to do it in as few nights as possible. Paddling is hard if you're not with someone, and sleeping is difficult, so it became my priority just knocking out checkpoints left and right."

Pfefferkorn paid for the remarkable improvement in her performance with badly blistered hands. "Paddling wasn't too painful, but repositioning the paddle was agony. I didn't put on ChapStick or sun screen that last day, because I didn't want to take my hands off my paddle."

Why would someone subject themselves to that sort of pain?

"You find out a lot about how you deal with adversity," she said. "You learn so much about overcoming obstacles and where you get your motivation from when things get tough. Those are things that transfer to other parts of your life."







A faster race means blistered hands for some paddlers.

CHRISTINA GLAUNER, 33, LAWRENCE, KAN.

Customer Claims Representative, Women's Solo—96:12

Glauner enjoyed her experience in the women's tandem division of the 2006 MR340 so much that she bought a solo kayak three weeks later and began training for 2007. She paddled her new boat almost every weekend to get ready.

She and her former tandem partner, Edie Jackson, wanted to stay together and shave as many hours as possible off their first-year time of 100 hours,

32 minutes. When Jackson had to withdraw the second day, Glauner threw herself into paddling. She made excellent time, but ultimately decided that being alone didn't suit her and changed her approach.

"This year was a joyride instead of a hardship," said Glauner. "I had gotten through a lot of checkpoints early and decided to blow all those banked hours. I had a great time getting to

know people and relaxing. I actually felt as good on the last day as I did on the first day."

One of the factors contributing to her enjoyment was a change in her nutritional strategy. While other paddlers were downing power drinks concocted of fruit, yogurt, avocado and raw eggs, she asked her ground crew to bring her as much greasy fast food as possible.

"The first year, Edie and I tried to eat really healthy through the whole race," Glauner said. "We had a miserable time being able to eat at all after the first day. This year I ate lots of big old cheeseburgers, french fries.... It tasted the best, and I felt the best afterwards."

Glauner's most rewarding experience was spending time with two other solo paddlers, Richard Lovell and Mark Handley.

"They made my race great," she said. "Being around that kind of friendship was really inspiring. I was really lucky to be able to paddle with them."

Glauner, left, with former tandem partner Edie Jackson



COURTESY OF CHRISTINA GLAUNER

RICHARD LOVELL, 55, KANSAS CITY, MO.

Disabled, Men's Solo—97:6

Lovell worked in computer technology until throat cancer forced him to quit. He was undergoing radiation treatment when the first MR340 got underway in 2006, but he followed the race at the first few checkpoints and set his mind to enter the race the next year.

He already had a long-term love affair with the river, which is chronicled on his website, www.missouri.rivertrips.com. He had never owned a kayak, but he bought one and trained as best he could during cancer treatment. Race organizers were surprised when they received his registration for the 2007 race. They were more surprised the night before the race began, when he mentioned that he was undergoing chemotherapy for lung cancer.

Lovell said planning for the race helped get him through a difficult year.

"I didn't know that I would even be able to complete it, let alone in 100 hours," he said, "but I love the Missouri River. The cancer moved to my lungs before we caught it, and this could be my last chance to get on the river."

Paddling all 340 miles with Lovell was his long-time friend Mark Handley. Lovell's daughter, Cathy

Lovell, provided ground support, preparing food and pitching tents for them each night.

Race organizer Scott Mansker said it was both disturbing and uplifting to watch Lovell and Handley confront a challenge that defeats many young, healthy paddlers. At one point, Lovell's kayak ran into a wing dike. It broke Mansker's heart to see the frail but game Lovell struggling to keep up with demands of the grueling race.

"Richard was absolutely determined to finish the race," Mansker said. "He and Mark would strategize, and Mark was always there, watching over him like a guardian angel. It was beautiful to watch."

"The best part of [the] race was getting to see the river, even at night," said Lovell. "It was good to be back out there again. From the very beginning, I knew I would not win the race. I just wanted to be there for the river, and if I could do it in 100 hours, that would be even better."

Lovell and Handley finished dead last. Lovell's hands and backside were blistered, but he was triumphant. When his kayak touched shore in St. Charles, everyone cheered.

Lovell had surgery on one of his lungs the September following the



COURTESY OF RICHARD LOVELL

"It was good to be back out there. I just wanted to be there for the river"

—RICHARD LOWELL

race, and was scheduled to have surgery on the other the next month. He planned a paddling trip from St. Joseph to Kansas City to take place between the two surgeries, and was hoping to be in this year's MR340.

"Part of the lure of the race is knowing that there is such treasure to be tapped into," said Glauner. "Everyone's story is different, even though they are doing the same thing. Taking part in those other stories is exciting, and knowing that you are writing your own story is motivating."

This year's MR340 is set for July 15 through 19. For more information, visit www.rivermiles.com, or call 913-244-4666. ▲



Loggers train
in techniques
to improve
timber
harvesting
practices.

TOP NOTCH LOGGERS

*School
teaches timber
harvesters
how to help
Missouri
landowners.*

BY JOHN TUTTLE, PHOTOS BY DAVID STONNER

Private landowners in Missouri often need and want to manage the forested land on their property. They know that improving forests benefits wildlife as it assures forest health.

An important part of forest management—especially for wildlife—is creating habitat diversity. A forest containing mostly the same size trees with a closed canopy offers only one habitat type. It's like telling someone that all they can eat are beans.

One of the best ways to create a forest that contains a more varied habitat menu for wildlife is to harvest some of the timber. A timber harvest that creates a variety of species and sizes of trees interspersed with openings is desired. As a bonus, cleaning out mature or defective trees also leads to increased growth of the remaining trees and results in new tree regeneration, creating forest sustainability.

Landowners benefit directly because they can sell the timber that's removed.

Timber sales are a good deal all around, but to garner all possible benefits of the timber harvest it's important for a landowner to choose a competent logger, one who can perform a low-impact timber harvest that doesn't damage the remaining trees or habitat.

**Joe Glenn
(in orange)
teaches a logger
training class
at Peck Ranch.**





Resource Assistant Sarah Egly inspects a waterbar at Sunklands CA. Waterbars are mounds of dirt constructed by loggers on steep slopes to help lessen water erosion until new vegetation begins to grow.

Missouri's Valuable Forests

Missouri's timber industry contributes \$4.4 billion to the state's economy and provides 32,500 jobs. These jobs are in logging, sawmilling, construction and the processing of lumber into other wood products.

A large percentage of the residents in many counties earn their living from selling trees, harvesting timber and processing wood products.

Most of the 384 sawmills in the state make furniture lumber, pallets, railroad crossties and many other types of products. There are approximately 5,000 products made out of wood that we all use every day. Trees are a renewable resource. When forests are managed well, the supply of timber never ends.

LOGGER TRAINING

The Professional Timber Harvester Program has been training loggers in techniques to improve timber harvesting practices since the mid-1990s. The program, sponsored by the Missouri Forest Products Association with the assistance of the Missouri Department of Conservation, has now trained approximately 290 loggers.

Graduates have learned how to perform timber harvests without compromising forest health, soil, wildlife and forest aesthetics. PTH Loggers learn to directionally fell trees to prevent damage to remaining trees. They also learn how to protect and even enhance existing wildlife habitat.

Loggers must attend five days of "school" to complete the initial PTH training. Each year, trained loggers must take at least eight hours of continuing education that keeps them up-to-date on new management techniques in their industry. The PTH classes also give loggers a chance to share ideas and learn from others.

MFPA's logger instructor Joe Glenn, a full-time logger, has trained loggers for 14 years in Indiana, Illinois and Missouri. Glenn tells his trainees, "If you apply what you have learned in the PTH course and become good at doing the techniques, you will work more safely and end up saving time, which leads to money."

Loggers learn how to increase future revenues for landowners by creating healthier forests through forest management.

Generally, they learn to use management techniques that favor low tree damage during timber harvest. A skinned tree, for example, becomes less valuable because the damage reduces the range of products that can be made from the log.

Damaging other trees during harvest can result in insect and disease problems which can lead to structural defects or even the death of a tree. In fact, the butt logs of many trees that are harvested show evidence of earlier injury. Some are from previous harvests, although fire and grazing also are responsible for many tree injuries.

Another aspect of protecting forests is keeping soil in place during a timber harvest. In the Midwest, timber harvesting activities result in only minor soil erosion. Studies have shown that nearly 90 percent of erosion from a harvest site comes from roads, log landings and skid trails.

Top 5 Areas of Trained Logger Expertise

1. Forest management techniques
2. Wildlife habitat requirements
3. Best Management Practices to reduce soil erosion
4. Directional felling of trees to reduce damage to the remaining trees
5. Techniques to reduce negative aesthetics of a timber harvest.

Although some disturbance is unavoidable, carefully constructed waterbars in roads or skid trails dramatically reduce erosion. When a logger properly conducts a timber harvest, the physical impact usually only lasts until leaves fall or vegetation starts growing on the affected area.

THE BEST TECHNIQUES

In the PTH course, loggers learn forestry Best Management Practices. BPMs are methods or techniques designed by experts that have proven to produce desired results.

“Forestry Best Management Practices, if applied correctly, will reduce soil erosion off logging operations to nearly nothing,” Glenn said.

Four sessions in the PTH course teach loggers techniques for directionally felling trees, which increases safety while creating less damage in the woods. Other sessions cover topics such as equipment maintenance, harvest planning and how to cut dangerous trees called spring-poles.

Loggers also learn about wildlife management and how it is important to leave snags, brush piles and den trees for wildlife. Continuing classes have included such topics as skidder training, lumber grading and advanced cutting, as well as logging competition events.

Choosing a PTH logger for a timber harvest makes good sense for landowners. These loggers are trained in management practices that benefit the environment and the forest landowner. They know how to reduce soil erosion, protect remaining trees and reduce the amount of time before the harvested area becomes aesthetically pleasing. ▲



Top: MDC forester Aaron Holsapple (right) goes over a forest management plan with property owner John Ringwald.



Left: An MDC forester marks a tree for removal at Sunklands CA.

Professional Timber Harvester Program

For more information on the PTH program, call MFPA at 573-634-3252, visit www.moforest.org, or call MDC at 573-522-4115, ext. 3304.

Free Publication

The Conservation Department also publishes *Missouri Watershed Protection Practice*. This booklet describes various techniques that can be used to protect streams from erosion when conducting a timber harvest. To obtain a copy, write to MDC, Watershed Conservation Practice, PO Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102, e-mail pubstaff@mdc.mo.gov, or you can download a version at www.MissouriConservation.org/441.





BIG *Muddy* = BIG *Catfish*

BIG BLUE CATFISH HAVE THE
RUN OF THE MISSOURI RIVER.

BY JIM LOW, PHOTOS BY DAVID STONNER

Ed Schneider (right) and his fishing partner, Craig Dankenbring, often find blue catfish in the main channel of the Missouri River.

It was Thursday, and I was getting the jump on last year's long Independence Day weekend with Ed Schneider, hog producer and occasional Missouri River catfish guide. We had met for the first time at a convenience store in Waverly, five minutes from the town's nice new boat ramp. I was ready to catch fish. Big fish. Big blue catfish, to be exact, and everything looked promising.

For one thing, the river had stopped falling, and the water temperature was rising. A week or so earlier, a deluge had dropped 4 inches of rain on the area, bumping the river's level up 4 feet and dropping its temperature to the low 70s. Now it was back to nearly 80 degrees. Just the night before, Schneider had experienced a good bite.

We were getting a break in the weather, too. The day's high temperature was 85 degrees, and a pleasant breeze was pushing cotton-ball clouds around in an otherwise clear sky.

Schneider slid his boat, a 22-foot Bay Cruiser designed for coastal waters and powered by a 200 hp outboard, into the mocha-colored water at 3:30 p.m. An hour later, I boated the first fish

of the day, a fat 10-pound blue cat caught at the edge of the navigation channel on the outside of a long river bend. It looked like this was going to be a long, productive evening.

The fish got finicky after that, so Schneider shifted operations to a spot below a wing dike where a clump of flood-washed tree trunks and root wads promised channel catfish action. Birds serenaded us as the sun sank toward the water upriver. The channel cats proved picky, too, but that was okay. We were just killing time until dark, when the main event would commence.

Schneider is a blue cat specialist. After a friend introduced him to river fishing a decade ago, he got a little obsessed with it.

"I liked the challenge of figuring out where the fish were," he told me. "The Missouri is a tough river to figure out."

Now that he thinks he has figured it out, he hires out as a catfish guide. With all the money he has tied up in his boat and fishing equipment, it is a stretch to call Renegade Catfishing a business in the conventional sense. It is more of a calling.

"I like to show my clients how to find catfish and how to catch them," he said. He certainly did everything he could to explain the ways of Missouri River catfishing to me.

Schneider said the problem with finding blue cats in the Missouri River is the abundance of suitable habitat for the fish, which can top 100 pounds.

"The blue cat can live right where he wants to live," said Schneider. "He wants the deepest water, and he doesn't mind the current, so he's living right in the main channel."

There is a lot of "main channel" acreage in the Missouri River, but Schneider has discovered

"Tennessee tarpon," or skipjack herring, is the bait of choice for Ed Schneider and other big-cat specialists.



BARGES—THE CATFISH ANGLER'S FRIEND

Don't fret when a barge goes past, kicking up a large wake. Schneider says the disturbance frequently leads to a bite, as big catfish temporarily flee deep holes in the main channel and move around.



ways of narrowing his search. Blue catfish tend to retreat to deep water during the day, then come out at night to forage in shallower water. He looks for conditions that boost the chances a particular stretch of channel will hold big cats.

One is the entry of water from a tributary stream or a levee district drain. We found such a spot just a few yards downriver from a levee district outflow, and that's where we hooked the 10-pounder.

Big blues also like to hang out at the boundary between eddies and the main channel. He sometimes anchors in slack water just outside the current and casts into the channel, letting the flow carry his bait into that sweet spot.

Another consistent catfish attractor is a submerged hump of sand in or near the main channel. Schneider uses his boat's side-scanning sonar to locate some of these features. He finds others when the river is at low flow.

"When the river is down in December or January," he said, "I'll take that cold trip by

myself and lock spots in on my GPS. I found one sandbar last winter that actually has a hole in it. That was a thrill for me. That's a very big deal, knowing that when I'm night fishing I can go in two feet of water and have a hole right there with at least 12 feet of water."

Schneider's grasp of blue catfish behavior took years and hundreds of hours on the river to puzzle out. Some parts of the puzzle were harder than others to fit into place.

"It took me forever to learn to fish sandbars," said Schneider. "I didn't understand the principles behind it or anything about it. I didn't understand why a catfish would want just a bunch of sand. I didn't know about the mussels and the crayfish and the other things they are foraging on as they are drifting along. Three years ago I caught my first fish on a sandbar, and I can't tell you how excited I was. It was quite a revelation, because there's nothing about a sandbar that really jumps out at you, you know?"

Finding good fishing spots can be a challenge and part of the fun. Blue catfish are attracted to deep water and sandbars.



Schneider and Dankenbring make glow-in-the-dark tackle a handy tool. The green glowing rod tips vibrate at the end of the poles due to boat movement.

Schneider said understanding blue catfish's daily and annual cycles is another key to catching them.

"The time to fish is in the wintertime for me," he said. "That's the time for finding all the blues. A lot of them will be back behind the jetties during the day, but that's more the resting time for them. They are the night guys."

"In April, I catch big blues. In May, I catch big blues on the outside of bends. In June, they spawn. Then you definitely want to jump and try to find those smaller blue spots."

Most of the fish he had been catching before our trip were females that already had spawned. He was anticipating the action that would begin when male catfish finished their nest-guarding duties in tributary streams and returned to the big river, hungry and aggressive.

"It's good fishing right now," he said, "but any day now the males are going to get here, and they are going to be hot!"

Schneider said when the big males return they sometimes come into an area while he is fishing and push out the smaller fish.

"I love it when the big guys start showing up," he said. "I've seen it over and over, where you catch 7- or 10-pound channel cats, and then the biting stops for awhile and the next one the ham-

TACKLING BIG CATS

Schneider uses stout rods and heavy-duty saltwater bait-casting reels. The reels are spooled with 50-pound monofilament line. Rod holders allow him to fish several lines at once.

He swears by stout circle hooks, which he says set themselves and do a better job of turning strong fish in swift current. He ties 100-pound leaders to the hooks and attaches the leader to the main line with a triple swivel. The third eye of the swivel holds a 12- or 14-ounce lead sinker to hold the bait down in the river's relentless current. He is experimenting with a bait rig that puts a spinner flanked by orange plastic beads up the line a few inches from the bait. He's hoping the flash and vibration of the spinner will attract blue cats' attention.

"Tennessee tarpon" are big-cat specialists' bait of choice. These are skipjack herrings, which grow up to 16 inches long. He uses the oily fish to make "catfish sandwiches" by wrapping a flank fillet around a herring head. You can buy herring frozen from bait shops or travel to Pickwick Lake in northeastern Mississippi and catch them by the hundreds with cast nets, as Schneider does. He also keys in on shad and other baitfish in the early summer, when they congregate under mulberry trees in Missouri River tributaries to gorge on the ripe fruit. He says blue holes created by the flood of 1993 are full of shad, too, and are good places to throw a cast net for bait.

mer is down. The big boys have showed up!"

The "big boys" never showed up for me, even though we stuck it out into the wee hours of Independence Day, talking in the dark and listening to the water lapping at the sides of the boat. They did put in an appearance a few weeks later, when *Conservationist* Photographer David Stonner spent an evening with Schneider. With me and my fishing rod nowhere in sight, he boated a 36-pound blue.

I had a good time, though, even without catching a big one, and I took home two beautiful fillets from the fish we caught. More important, I learned enough to try it on my own next time. I may need a bigger boat, though. ▲



A night fishing trip turns out to be successful for Schneider.

Hunting and Fishing Calendar

FISHING

Black Bass (certain Ozark streams, see the *Wildlife Code*)

5/24/08 2/28/09

impoundments and other streams year-round

Bullfrogs and Green Frogs Sunset Midnight

6/30/08 10/31/08

Gigging Nongame Fish 9/15/08 1/31/09

Trout Parks 3/1/08 10/31/08

HUNTING

Coyotes 5/12/08 3/31/09

Crow 11/1/08 3/3/09

Deer

Archery 9/15/08 11/14/08

11/26/08 1/15/09

Firearms

Urban 10/3/08 10/6/08

Youth 11/1/08 11/2/08

1/3/09 1/4/09

November 11/15/08 11/25/08

Muzzleloader 11/28/08 12/7/08

Antlerless 12/13/08 12/21/08

Groundhog 5/12/08 12/15/08

Rabbits 10/1/08 2/15/09

Squirrels 5/24/08 2/15/09

Turkey

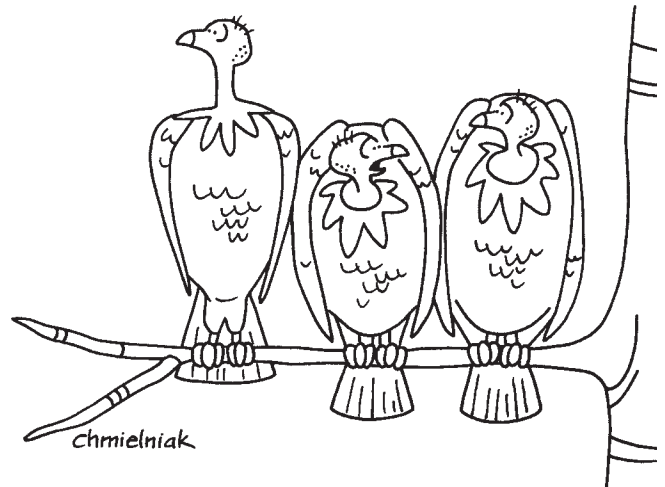
Archery 9/15/08 11/14/08

11/26/08 1/15/09

Firearms 10/1/08 10/31/08

For complete information about seasons, limits, methods and restrictions, consult the *Wildlife Code* and the current summaries of *Missouri Hunting and Trapping Regulations* and *Missouri Fishing Regulations*, the *Fall Deer and Turkey Hunting Regulations and Information*, the *Waterfowl Hunting Digest* and the *Migratory Bird Hunting Digest*. For more information visit www.MissouriConservation.org/8707 or permit vendors.

The Department of Conservation's computerized point-of-sale system allows you to purchase or replace your permits through local vendors or by phone. The toll-free number is 800-392-4115. Allow 10 days for delivery of telephone purchases. To purchase permits online go to www.wildlifelicense.com/mo/.



"His folks were always after him about his posture."

Contributors



Conservationist Staff Writer JIM LOW grew up on the banks of the Missouri River. He treasures time spent hunting, fishing, beach combing or simply drifting on the Big Muddy. His racing years are behind him, but he shares the passion that Missouri River 340 contestants feel for the majestic river.

JOHN TUTTLE is the forest products program supervisor for the Department. Before that, he was a resource forester at Van Buren. He was also a professional logger for 18 years and grew up logging with his father. He currently lives in New Bloomfield with his wife, Regina, and three children, Dustin, Brittany and Brooke.



SIGN UP NOW

Get the weekly fishing report

The Statewide Weekly Fishing Report gives general fishing conditions at selected lakes, rivers and trout parks across Missouri. The fishing report is published from the first Thursday in April through September. To subscribe, submit your e-mail address at www.MissouriConservation.org/4183



TIME CAPSULE

June 1978

Missouri's Mountain Boomer by Tom

R. Johnson is about the Eastern collared lizard, also known as

"mountain boomer." The collared lizard is a member of the iguana

family. It is one of the most colorful lizards and has a large chunky

head, long tail and long powerful hind legs. They range from 10 to 12 inches in total length. Eastern

collared lizards are restricted to the sandstone glades and dry limestone of the Ozarks. Out of the 12 kinds of lizards in Missouri, the collared lizard is the only one that can walk on its hind legs and is

known to run as fast as 16 miles per hour. They are not venomous, but if captured will bite to defend themselves.—Contributed by the Circulation staff



AGENT NOTES

Hunters and trappers prevent striped skunks from bedeviling homeowners.

PEOPLE CALL CONSERVATION AGENTS for help in dealing with raccoons in garbage, opossums on back porches and bats in attics. Some of the trickiest "nuisance wildlife" calls we get, however, deal with striped skunks.

The striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*—which literally translates to foul smell), gets its bad rap from the unpleasant odor it emits when it feels threatened. Skunks may live in a ground burrow, or beneath a building or rock pile. Skunks do not truly hibernate so you will see them year-round, but they are primarily nocturnal. When these critters become overpopulated, they cause more problems around homes.

Agents are thankful that there are hunters and trappers to help to keep these animals from becoming too numerous and causing even more problems. They pursue these skunks because their pelts can be sold to fur buyers, making a good thing out of a potential nuisance.

For more information on nuisance animal prevention and damage control, go to <http://mdc4.mdc.mo.gov/Documents/257.pdf>, or contact your regional Conservation Department office (phone numbers are listed on Page 3) to receive a free brochure. Of course, you can always contact your local conservation agent for help with any nuisance animal problem.



Kelly Knowles is the District Supervisor for the Protection Division in the Central Region. If you would like to contact the agent for your county, phone your regional Conservation office listed on Page 3.

behind the CODE

The Wildlife Code has protected endangered species since 1973.

BY TOM Cwynar

The *Wildlife Code* protects 67 endangered species. Of that number, 30 are federally endangered and are subject to federal penalties. The remainder are state endangered only.

The process for adding a species to the list begins with a Conservation Department biologist writing a status report defining threats to a species and recommending protection. If listing is supported by the Department's Regulations Committee, it is then up to the Conservation Commission to give their approval. The public then has a chance to voice support or opposition before it is included in the *Wildlife Code*.

Removing a species from the list requires the same process.

The endangered species list is a slow-moving one. Only a handful of species have been added this decade and only one has been removed. That's because threats to species, such as climate changes and habitat loss, do not fluctuate much over time, and populations recover slowly.

Conservation Department biologists do all they can to improve habitat and alleviate threats to endangered species. The Next Generation strategic plan sets a goal of removing five species from the state endangered species list by 2015 through habitat management, threat reduction, education and monitoring.

The Department is well on its way to achieving this goal. Two species on the state endangered list are presently being considered for removal.



“I AM CONSERVATION”

Brothers Gary (left) and Kevin Harral started squirrel hunting with their dad when they both were very young. “We might go squirrel hunting as much as five or six times a week,” said Kevin, “but we’re not very good shots, so we don’t come away with as many squirrels as you might think. Our sister always outshoots us.” Both brothers said their favorite way to prepare squirrel is to grill them with a salt and spice rub and barbecue sauce. To learn more about conservation activities, visit www.MissouriConservation.org. —PHOTO BY DAVID STONNER



Subscribe online

www.MissouriConservation.org/15287

*Free to
Missouri households*